DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 407 301 SO 026 901

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TITLE	A Third View of the Role of the Public School in Multicultural Canada.
PUB DATE	96
NOTE	34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
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PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Cross Cultural Studies; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Context; Cultural Interrelationships; *Cultural Pluralism; Elementary Secondary Education; Ethnic Relations; Foreign Countries; *Multicultural Education; *Public Schools; Social Integration
IDENTIFIERS	*Canada; *Quebec

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of public education in multicultural societies, specifically Canada and Quebec. The paper explores the response of the Canadian society to the cultural and religious differences of minority groups, as well as the extent of validation of this difference in the public schools. The study, based on an holistic, multidisciplinary theoretical framework, developed a multi-layered sociological and constructivist perspective both for the analysis and for solutions of multicultural education in Canada. Part 1 highlights the various levels of exclusion of immigrants/citizens at the structural, institutional, and educational levels of institutional multiculturalism. Part 2 describes the replication of institutional multiculturalism in the education system by discussing the essentialist ideology of "la culture publique commune" (the public common culture) at the core of curricula content and educational strategy of multicultural education. Part 3 challenges the prevalent "dirigiste" multicultural education in Quebec, Canada. Proposals are offered for an action reform plan to broaden the application of multicultural education in its truest sense. Contains 28 references. (EH)

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"A Third View of the Role of the Public School in Multicultural Canada."

By Zakia Belhachmi. Université de Montréal.

Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) New York, 1996.

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of public education in multicultural societies, specifically Canada and Quebec from the angle of the institutional impact of ethno-cultural and religious diversity on the educational clientele. Its purpose, is to explore the response of the Canadian society to the cultural and religious difference of minority groups as well as the extent of validation of this difference in the public school.

Based on an holistic, multidisciplinary theoretical framework that draws respectively from political science (Walzer, 1983, 1992); comparative ethnic studies (Rex, 1994), religious studies (Milot, 1993); and various branches of sociology of education (Berger & Luckman, 1967; and Bourdieu, 1990); comparative and international education (Belhachmi, 1983); and Post-modernist feminist epistemology (Belhachmi, 1995), the study developed a multi-layered sociological and constructivist perspective both for the analysis, and for solutions of Multicultural education in Quebec.

Accordingly, part I highlights the various levels of exclusion of immigrants/citizens at the structural, institutional and educational levels of institutional multiculturalism; illustrating with Quebec's government policies of immigration and education.

Part II, describes the replication of institutional multiculturalism in the educational system by discussing the essentialist ideology of "la culture publique commune" at the core of curricula content and educational strategy of Multicultural education.

Part III challenges the prevalent "dirigiste" multicultural education in Quebec. First, it suggests an inclusive form of Multiculturalism and an alternative public school for Canada based on the pluralistic view of democracy and equality described in the study's theoretical framework, and grounded in the common public culture "in the making". Second, it proposes a three-action reform plan in order to firmly "anchor" cultural convergence (societal) and cognitive ones (ideological and educational) in the daily life of Canadian citizens; namely, the structural and institutional accommodation of minority groups; the broadening of the "institutional culture" and of the curriculum; and the adoption of an inter-cultural pedagogy.

Introduction

The recognition of cultural difference facing all multicultural societies tody is not a new reality. What is new in these societies is the "fragmentation of identity" experienced both by the majority and minority groups. This fragmentation can be attributed on the one hand to the emergence of a post-modern[1] culture that denounces the inadequacy of modernist models of identity and the homogenization of cultural identity. And on the other hand, to the diversity of the migration population in the last decades following the decolonization era, which also raises the question of legitimacy of cultural and institutional hegemony, and the need for alternative models in the management of cultural diversity (Schermerhorn 1970; Breton, 1991).

These two developments: post-modernity and migration diversity reflect a crisis in identity representation with two serious consequences for contemporary multicultural societies. First, on the significance placed by several social groups on the concept of cultural identity, and their various claims for cultural recognition by the state (Taylor, 1992). Second, on the redefinition of the mandate of public school and its role not only in identity representation, but also its validation in the teaching and learning process (Banks, 1988, 1992).

In view of these recent developments, this study rejects the modernist discourse and its binary theoretical paradigm which structures social reality into several dualities: secularism/religion, modernity/tradition etc...Likewise, it rejects the modernist discourse's essentialist and simplistic representation of the notion of power, which excludes the multi-facets of power at work in society as well as it masks the existing conflicts between social groups in their struggle for and access to equality. In short, the study demystifies the double myth of the state's and the school's neutrality in the shaping of individual and collective identity, and instead, insists on the complementarity between both in identity formation, and sustenance.

Accordingly, the study examines the role of public school in Multicultural Canada, especially in Quebec, from the angle of the institutional impact on ethno-cultural diversity as a clientele of education. Rather than viewing the question of immigrants/citizens in terms of integration into a particular model, this study looks at immigrants/citizens issue in terms of inclusion[2] in the construction of a pluralistic democratic society and a public culture in the making. Simultaneously it tackles the educational activity of citizens in terms of relationships between inter-ethnic and religious social groups in their daily-life experience and practice of democracy. In brief, the study places the state and the school at the centre of the management of cultural diversity, and calls for the ethical duty of both to ensure spaces of freedom and resistance to the citizens who do not share the dominant ideology of society.

I. The Study's Theoretical Framework

Opposed to the modernist/dualist theoretical framework that prevails in the analysis of cultural pluralism today in Canada, which at times emphasizes on individualism (Kymlicka, 1989; Gutmann 1992), and at other times on community (Taylor, 1992), this study proposes an alternative holistic theoretical framework. The latter is essentially, inclusive and interdisciplinary as it adheres to a constructivist sociological perspective. In light of this perspective, the study views the "renewed" liberal vision of Kymlicka (1989,a) as problematic. Although it conceives cultural identity as a dynamic phenomenon inclusive of both an affiliation to a given community in a given moment in history, and the free action of the individual member of this community to choose to maintain his/her original identity or to change it, Kymlicka's perspective remains inherently deterministic, as it makes individual change totally dependent on the community's "structure of social understanding" (p, 170)). In fact, Kymlicka himself, recognizes that the structure of social understanding confines both the practice of individual freedom vis a vis the community's culture, and limits the practice of the scientific culture of the

community which sustains the school system. (p,71)

In comparison, the communitarian vision of identity proposed by Taylor is far less deterministic. The latter is founded on both the importance of community affiliation in the shaping of personal identity, and on the dialectic social process that links the person to the community within which his/her social insertion takes place. Here, the emphasis is made not on the choice of identity, but rather on the right to equal representation in cultural identity. Accordingly, what is at stake in identity is the recognition of cultural difference as a moral obligation inextricably linked to an equality of access in society. Therefore, any community "in the name of justice" is entitled to the recognition by the state and society of its cultural and religious difference within public institutions.

Moreover the communitarian vision of Taylor advocates that multicultural policies include national cultural heritage as a "common good" to be subjected to deliberation et not imposition:

> Human identity is created dialogically, in response to our relations, including our actual dialogues with others. The dichotomy posed by some political theorists between atomistic and socially constructed individuals is therefore a false one...A society that recognizes individual identity will be a deliberative, democratic society because individual identity is partly constituted by collective dialogues. (p, 7)

Nonetheless, the communitarian vision of Taylor is problematic too. First, for its potential anti-democratic sectarism; especially in the context of rising right movements everywhere as well as various cultural forms of fundamentalism (Belhachmi, 1995). As Touraine (1994) so aptly observes:

> The danger is to favour, in the name of respect some differences to lead to the formation of community powers which impose, inside a particular milieu, an anti-democratic authority. The political society will then be only a market for transactions vaguely regulated between closed communities in their obsession with their identity and their homogeneity (p:59)

Second, the communitarian vision of Taylor, involves the

risk of compromising the formation of an independent moral conscience, as well as its free and democratic communication (Habermas, 1987). Thus, neither the communitarian vision of Taylor, nor that of individual autonomy proposed by Kymlicka are adequate to a multiple cultural context, because the norm for a multicultural context is both a constant construction of identity, and a simultaneous adherence to various sub-cultures within the larger society. For this reason, I propose a vision of "nomadic identity"[3] that combines a "core identity" with alterity.[4]

From a sociological constructivist perspective that integrates the participation and the collaboration of individuals and society, (Bergman & Luckman 1967, Bourdieu 1990), the study maintains that cultural identity is a "social construction" holding a double history of social groups (collective history), and of individuals (personal history). The fundamental question in identity, therefore, is to ensure that the paradigm of democracy to which a liberal democracy adheres to really accommodates this double history; namely whether it guarantees the practice of the civil and the civic rights to all their citizens in an equal fashion. After all democracy is not monolithic, but inherently, multidimensional (representation vs direct democracy, the role of pressure-groups, of lobbies, and civil society. (Touraine (1994). Not only does democracy vary widely from a society to another, a cultural context to another, and a historical period to another, but it also plays a double role within society. First, it shapes national cultural identity, its parameters of evolution, and its future; hence the importance of knowing the structural and institutional context of cultural diversity proper to each individual country. Second, democracy orients the identity process of the individual as a member of society; hence the necessity of knowing the modalities of inclusion provided by the state as a formative agent for the socialization of citizens both in society and in the public school.

From this sociological constructivist perspective, I argue, the problematic of education in multicultural society is linked not only to the principle of democracy but also to its practice. For

this reason, this study draws the a constructivist perspective both for analysis and solutions. In terms of analysis, this perspective centres on the working of democracy from two facets: the democratic process of inclusion of immigrants/citizens in society, and the educational process of students in a democratic multicultural education. In the first part I question the structural context of liberal democracy within which the management of public institutions takes place illustrating with Quebec. This questioning allows me on the one hand to demonstrate that the present crisis in Canadian public education reflects a much more general crisis of liberal democracy in the face of cultural and religious diversity that constitute its social fabric. On the other hand, it enables me to highlight the link between the social and mental structures involved in the definition national cultural identity and the repercussions of both these structures on the cultural inclusion of minorities (Bourdieu 1992)

The second part, focuses on institutional pluralism presently practised in Quebec as being a replication of the structural context. It demonstrates that the imposition of the structural and institutional levels of pluralism acknowledge only the civic right of social groups at the expense of their civil rights. As a result, social groups are neither guaranteed equal political status among themselves, nor enjoyment of equal practice of this status in their daily lives. Similarly, the second part discusses the essentialist ideology of "la culture public commune" (the public common culture) imposed at the level of curricula content in the school system; which eliminates the various cultural heritages of social groups in Quebec.

In light of a Canadian public culture "in the making", the third part proposes an alternative public education based on the inclusion of the various cultural heritages that compose today's multicultural Canada. It redefines the particular educational challenges of Quebec as being multifaceted; namely structural (systemic), institutional, and pedagogical. Accordingly, this part proposes a few structural and institutional solutions as essential

pre-requisites for a new educational orientation, starting from philosophy, and including procedure, and curricular reforms.

In terms of solutions, the constructivist sociological perspective, yields to the redefinition of cultural pluralism as being a complex political, societal, cultural, and educational process that requires an inclusive and pluridisciplinary theoretical framework both at the conceptual and procedural levels in order to "anchor" in the daily life of citizens the cultural convergence existing in society, and cognitive convergence in education. This inclusive theoretical framework borrows respectively from political sciences (Walzer 1983, 1992); comparative ethnic studies (Rex, 1994); religious studies (Milot, 1993); and different branches education: sociology of education (Luckman 1967, et Bourdieu 1990), comparative and international education, and post-modernist feminist epistemology (Belhachmi, 1983, 1995).

From Walzer (1983), I draw on his definition of "the good" which clarifies that human needs are heterogeneous and do not comply to the same pre-defined hierarchical order of needs; hence the urgency for a new notion of justice "of different spheres" that better responds to, and accommodates people. The social justice of several spheres advocated by Walzer, emanates from a notion of equality that emphasizes on the actual practice of equality within democratic institutions, and calls for the application of "differentiated equality" according to the spheres of needs. This new notion of justice engenders significant consequences not only for the concept of "la culture publique commune", but also for the role of public education and the mandate of the school. Derived from a pluralist view of democracy, the logic of multi-levelled equality transforms the concept of "common public culture" into a "culture constructed in common"; which approaches cultural identity according to the spheres it encounters. This entails also adopting a pluralist education that makes room for different modes of living, and "of seeing" in the teaching process. In short, within the logic of spheres of justice and a pluralist democracy the

notion of equality implies a mutual acceptance of cultural and religious differences at the political and social levels on the basis of reciprocity in relations, and interdependence as a life-style in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, Charters, and laws. Likewise, from the position of pluralist democracy, the educational system is pivotal in fostering coexistence between distinct cultural and religious identities at school.

Last but not least, the advocacy for a pluralistic education in public institutions has multiples justifications stemming from recent research in the social sciences. First, the sociology of education (Berger & Lukman 1967, and Bourdieu, 1992), has demonstrated that the process of the construction of reality, as well as that of knowledge are both based on a double individual and collective memory. By eliminating one of these memories from cultural identity, one adversely affects the whole process of knowledge acquisition of the learner; namely self-esteem and inter-relationships with others. This challenges Gutmann's (1992) assertion that self-esteem through individual success alone is adequate for multicultural education. Not only, does her model exclude identification to a socio-cultural group, but introduces coercion in the teaching process. Under the guise of individual choice, Gutmann implicitly incites the learner to 'choose' his/her identity based on incomplete information already pre-selected for him/her in the curriculum. In contrast, the collective vision of a pluralist education aims not only at the training of the person as a subject of law (civic values), but also her information as a "carrier" of history and culture (civil values). Here, the freedom of choice is based on a real access to multiple information freely communicated and disseminated within the curriculum and the school system at large.

Second, religious studies (Milot, 1993) also showed that the perception of social reality as well as the construction of knowledge about reality are not founded exclusively on a secular cultural social world. In Milot's words:

> We know that large aspects of individual and social life are understandable in part by religious variables. Thus, it is hard to see why religious knowledge is excluded from the education of future citizens that would live in a world where religion will probably continue to shape identities and cultures. (1993, 11)

Third, some post-modernist feminist perspectives (Belhachmi, 1995), make a compelling argument for the inclusion of religion in the curriculum. Beyond the moral right to religious affiliation, this perspective view religion as an integral part of the spiritual, intellectual and cultural process of renewal of Western liberal democracies. As such, the inclusion of religion in the curriculum, is more than just a moral obligation, it is also an intellectual and scientific one. After all, science offers only one interpretation of social reality and of knowledge. Spiritual, subjective, and narrative interpretations are other equally important forms of knowledge that are excluded from the modernist "enlightened", positivist, and objective perspective. Most importantly, the post-modernist and feminist perspectives **restore relational knowledge** both cultural and educational processes. Not only, do these perspectives call attention to the importance of relational knowledge in identity formation, but also in identification. Thus, they rightly challenge monoliths and objectivity as norms and replace them with multiplicity and objective/subjective symbiosis in the construction of social reality and of human interpretations. (Belhachmi, 1995).

The perspectives of religious studies and post-modernist feminism have significant applications for pluralist education; especially for the context of Quebec where confessional schools are still powerful'. The religious perspective, by re-opening a space for the re-integration of religion in the school curriculum, avoids both the isolation of segregated teaching, and the ostracization of religious particularism. Likewise, it informs students about religious differences as being peoples' choices with particular histories. Ultimately, the religious perspective becomes also "a procedural method" for a pluralist education, as it integrates the

influence of religion in the identity process of people in their daily life practice as well as in their learning process. In short, the religious perspective aims at practising pluralist democracy in the integration of multiple religion at school while at the same time eliminating the hegemony of one religion over another in the curriculum.

The post-modernist feminist perspective, is more radical, as it challenges the continuing adherence of educational institutions to the modernist monolithic view of cultural identity and coherence at the core of resistance to cultural diversity and accommodation. By unraveling the multi-layers of exclusion (gender, religion, ethnicity, race, and language), this perspective actually challenges the hierarchical power structure in society and its replication at the structural and institutional levels. By the same token, it seeks to restore a balance in the societal power-structure. That is, the institutionalization of cultural coherence within the school system on the basis of a fractured, and diffuse conception cultural identity.

The notion of "fractured cultural identity" is key in achieving an equilibrium in the balance of power at the structural,institutional, and intellectual levels not only in "representation" but also in practice; hence covering various strata of society where "different spheres" of inequality are found. (Belhachmi, 1995). In brief, the post-modernist feminist perspective by changing cognitive representations of culture, actually paves the way for the expansion of the social structures, including the public school, thus fully integrating multiple levels of exclusions in the educational reforms.

I. The Study

1. The Emergence of the Structural Context of Multiculturalism in Canada

The historical and social context between the First Nations and the so called "founding nations" French and English have generated a distinctive situation of cultural pluralism in Canada.

In fact, the question of multiculturalism has from the outset surfaced from a context of conflict reflecting the relationship between the natives, and the first French and English settlers. It later developed in the context of Quebec's resistance to the political ascendancy and domination of the English (Rex 1994 p,23). The state, in a simultaneous response to this trilogy (first nations, founding nations, and immigrants), declared Canada a Multicultural society to be evolving in a context of bilinguism. Subsequently, the question of bilinguism and biculturalism was born, becoming an important component of the political agenda between French and English Canadians.

Meanwhile the immigrants destiny remained predicated by the relationship between these three groups; leading them in to what Parkin (1979) calls " a double closure" situation. That is, an uneasy coalition with the earlier French and English settlers who by controling the political system, engage immigrants into "their" political agendas, and in the process forsake their own struggle for equality[4]. Simultaneously, the state's "solution" for later immigrants in Canada became to a large extent "a matter of rhetoric" (Rex 1994:25). While the very notion of a multicultural society seemed to suggest a sharing of control of the political system, and the elaboration of a political culture in the public domain, this was never implemented in reality. Instead, what has emerged was the partial recognition of the right of minorities to enjoy cultural difference and linguistic diversity in the private and community domain (Rex p,25). In so doing, the government of Canada conveniently excluded immigrants from political participation and focused on the symbolic cultural aspect of various communities as manifested in its funding of exotic festivals.

Thus, the history of Canada attests to the fact that the structural framework for multiculturalism is a hotly contested terrain where the recognition of ethno-cultural identity is a debate centred around access to equality for all. In light of this controversial structural context, I argue, one can contextualize

all struggles and advocacies for equality; namely the "national question" of Quebec, the autonomy of the First Nations, and the status of the so called "communautés culturelles" (cultural communities)[7]. Evidently, the historical conditions and needs between various communities are different, but this does not rule out the fact that all communities face problem of recognition of their cultural difference. Two serious consequences emanated from this unequitable structural context. On the one hand, the specific structural context of Canada proved to be a fertile soil for the initiation of a process of deliberation on cultural identity and citizenship both for francophone minority, and other minorities who speak other languages and are bearers of cultures other than French or English. On the other hand, the same structural context proved just as fertile in allowing bigotry and discrimination policies of citizenship. An example of such policies are those articulated by Anderson et Fridere (1981) and their disciples; who grant special privileges to some social groups while denying them to others as evidenced in the arbitrary distinction they make between the alleged "communautés nationales" and "les communautés culturelles". These policies and theories have led to a serious "discrimination gap" ~~on the one hand~~ between individual and collective rights of citizens ~~right~~s still debated today as controversial within the philosophy of law (Hartney, 1994). Above all, they led to the institutionalization of hierarchy of rights between communities so strongly contested today in Canada as the main source social discontent and political unrest in Quebec. (Fontaine and Shiose 1991).

1.2. The Implications of the Structural Context for the Policies of Multiculturalism: The Case of Quebec

The controversial structural context of Canada has led to an institutional pluralism heavily permeated by an ideology of double standards which, under the guise of "civic nationalism" obscures not only the ethnic nationalism at the root of institutional pluralism, but also institutionalizes the domestication of other communities. Thus, unlike the assertions made by Carens (1995) that

multiculturalism in Canada defined on "civic nationalism" is beneficial for all, I maintain, that it is hegemonic due to its hierarchy in citizenship; discriminations made between social groups and individuals; and absence of a coherent moral order. As a such, this institutional multiculturalism in Canada conceals various layers of inequality, namely gender, class, race, ethnicity, and religion which also serve as "categories" of exclusion and manipulation of minorities and their assimilation in the dominant culture. Salient examples of these categorizations that contribute to their ghettoization of minorities "as different" are labels like "communautes visibles" implicitly referring to non-white communities; or "allophones" to designate the ethnic and linguistic communities other than French or English.

At the core of the mismanagement of cultural pluralism in Quebec, therefore, is the government's inherent failure and inability to resolve a fundamental question: How to establish and maintain an equilibrium in the continuous renewal between the legitimate diversity and difference in cultural identity, and at the same time retain a coherence in the social, and moral order. As a result, Quebec society suffers from a cultural anomie manifested in the moral, social, psychological and political exclusion of people at various strata of society (race, gender, religion, ethnicity, and language) and cross the majority and the minority. In fact, the cultural anomie is further exacerbated by the government's persitence in deploying hegemonic institutional multicultural policies that domesticate communities other than those affiliated with Judeo-Christian culture; and institutionalizing monolithic multicultural educational policies "for their benefit". Two official documents, namely those of Le Conseil des Communautés et de l'Immigration (CCCI): Gérer la Diversité dans Un Québec Francophone, Démocratique et Pluraliste (1993). And Le Conseil Supérieur de l'Education (CSE): Pour Un Accueil et Une Intégration Réussie des Elèves des Communautés Culturelles[a] (1993) illustrate the way the ideology of domestication is encapsulated in government policies.

Respectively, the policies contained in these documents revolve around "a common public culture" which inherently promotes the universalization of identity, and a "common body" of knowledge to be imparted at school. As such, these policies promote a hierarchical societal project that contains dichotomous notions of privileged deprived; insider vs outsider; and dominant vs subjugated. For example, the CCCI document, defines history as a component of the common public culture: "The necessary reference for a sort of common and evolutionary memory, shared by its members through a reasonable knowledge of history of Quebec heritage (Knowledge which varies of course according to the degree of schooling of people)" (p,19). Clearly, this articulation of history presupposes a homogeneity in the collective memory of the people living in Quebec and their history. As presented, "the common" history remains profoundly monolithic. Above all, it is dangerously static: even the process of evolution of such a history is pre-determined as it allows the updating of events in time and space related to the ethnic/French social group only, and excludes other social groups that constitute Quebec's diverse demographics and contribute to Quebec's history and culture.

Similarly, the CSE presents the common public culture as "a cultural tradition inspired from indigenous French, British, American contributions, and the input of Western Judeo-christian tradition" (p,72) As stated, the common public culture is clearly imposed and not proposed. As such, it is not a subject for debate, nor deliberation, but rather "a frame of de reference" to which other communities must adhere to be accepted in Quebec society. Above all, this definition of common culture is not only monolithic but also strikingly "fixed" and ahistorical: even the members of the majority find difficulties in identifying with values believed to be constitutive of the common culture. Not only does the CSE assume homogeneity and eliminate individual difference, but also the notion of change. For instance, the CSE has assimilated in the common public culture members of the majority who labelled themselves as atheist, or converted to other religions; hence

masking both multiplicity and difference, and excluding all other forms of spirituality to which many people adhere to both within the majority and minority groups. In a nutshell, the Quebec's government policies, in addition to their flagrant violation of the moral independence of individual and social groups guaranteed by The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, are inherently authoritative; thus tyrannical and "dirigiste".

II. Ramifications of Institutional Pluralism on the Educational Modalities and Process

1. Reductionism of Cultural Pluralism at the level of Educational Modalities

A scrutiny of the public education of Quebec shows a replication the universalist perspective of cultural diversity existing at the institutional level and its "dirigiste" nature. Moreover, the recent history of public deliberation in Quebec, regarding the recognition of other religions and languages, aptly illustrates the inadequacy of the institutional response to multiculturalism and its solutions. For instance, the Quebec experience of institutional pluralism in education signals the gap existing between educational goals and their practice. More often than not, multicultural communities have witnessed a variety of school administrations which instead of promoting inter-dependence between students of "communautés culturelles" ended up isolating them from "the public school culture". As such, multicultural education in Quebec is far from reflecting the spirit of commitment of equal and multiple representation contained in the Charter.

This distance between the laws and their practice has been widely documented by both Pagé (1993) and Proulx (1993). Pagé (1993) made the link between Canadian laws and the structure of education when he observed the way the whole public education of Quebec was structured on the model of institutional pluralism as articulated in "la loi de l'Instruction Public (loi 107)." To illustrate, Pagé shows the link between this law and the articles 93 of the Canadian Constitution, and the article 82 after the constitutional amendments and revision of 1982 both of which grant

communities other than catholic and protestant to pursue an educational project that includes other confessions and languages.

Nevertheless, when the Arab-Muslim community of Montreal requested the establishment of "a school of their own" in order to benefit from the same democratic rights granted by the law 107, and implemented by other communities, it was vigorously rejected.' Clearly the rejection of the Arab-Muslim community's request attests to the continuous resistance of institutional multiculturalism to the inclusion of religious, ethnic and linguistic differences in the public school. Pagé (1993) summarizes the double standards of the law 107 that grants equality to all communities in education as follows:

> The law 107 does not necessarily support a school system within which the institutions are divided and exclusionist. Certainly, this law has not been conceived with the aim of favouring the recognition of diversity inside common institutions. It is not erroneous, therefore, to think that the law 107 may favour the implantation favour school structures that can serve as a shelter for ethnic nationalism. (p, 8)

However, Pagé omits to discribe the impact of the double standards of the law 107 on the process of education. For this impact Proulx's study (1993) on the exclusion of religious diversity in the public school is invaluable. Here, Proulx highlights the discrepancy between the intent and practice in law. To illustrate, he argues on the one hand that the openness of the public school to religious diversity as manifested in the law on public instruction of 1989) (la loi de l'instruction Public de 1989), and its practice only aims at establishing "a separate" instruction of religion for different groups; leading to two separatist educational solutions. One, that grants a recognition of a separate status in within the school as a public institution. The other favours the establishment of separate schools altogether such as the case for Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Muslims etc... Thus, Proulx deduces: "the practice of the declared right is strongly breached" (p,192).

On the other hand, Proulx discusses the limits of "openness"

of the instruction law of 1989 in actual implementation. According to him, while the school boards are not restricted by this law to teach religions, by virtue of their "openness", they are nevertheless mandated to teach Christian and Protestant religions only (pp.192-193). In short, Proulx aptly demonstrates the double standards contained in the 1989 instruction law which claims "openness" to religious multiplicity in principle while it actually fosters "closure" and minimizes contact between learners of different religious backgrounds in practice.

In my view the double standards contained in Canadian laws both institutional and educational run much deeper. They reflect Quebec's unresolved issue of separation between religion and secularism at the ideological and the institutional levels. In turn, this explains the prevailing ambiguity in the state's logic and its simultaneous adherence to both religion and secularism (laicité) in educational procedure. Two major problems issued from this ambiguity. First, the imposition of a Catholic-inspired moral education to all teaching in the public school, which conveniently facilitated the discard of other religions whenever they conflicted with the dominant religion as the obstacle to modernity and secularism. Second, more insidious, is the justification and legitimation of exclusion on the basis of equality provided by secularism.

Thus, I argue, the application by the state of the dual logic of rligion and secularism serve as "a procedural method" for both the "homogenization" of minorities by abolishing their distinctive religious symbols; and their exclusion from mainstream education by eliminating their "border knowledge" access to the formal realm of the public school. Above all, the dual logic allows the state to justify a technocratic approach in multicultural education both in institutional procedures and teaching strategies.

2. Reproductions of Cultural Reductionism in Educational Institutions and Curricular Strategies

In order to sustain the homogeneity in educational institutions and curricular strategies, the Quebec's school system

remain markedly inscribed within technocratic model as manifested in the recent the educational project suggested by Berthelot (1994 a & b). First, the author highlights that Quebec is undergoing an educational crisis which he rightly attributes to a problem of inadequacy the educational model to the new realities of Quebec society. Second, he identifies the solution of this crisis as being twofold: "a large debate on the goals of education, and the provision of means to pursue the democratisation enterprise." (1994 a. p,1).

More specifically, Berthelot recommends that the remedy for the crisis of education in Quebec should revolve around two fundamental issues: "equality of opportunity" and " meritocracy". (1994.a.p,3). In tackling these two issues, Berthelot not only links individual and collective dimensions in the policies of education to establish a real "educative democracy" (p,6), but he also connects the universal to the particular in the practice of democratic educational policies. Notwithstanding, the educational project of Berthelot falls short once the modalities of its application are carefully scrutinized. The failure resides both at the ideological and the procedural levels. The first concerns the values emphasized in this project, while the second relates to the procedure chosen for student training. On the one hand the values in question duly replicate the French democratic trilogy "liberté, égalité, fraternité" of the French public institutions since 1789. (1994.a.p,5).

Most importantly, even the suggested redefinition of values is only an update of the French cultural paradigm and not the elaboration of a pluralist cultural paradigm that responds to the multicultural reality of Quebec today. On the other hand, the educational training Berthelot proposes excludes any possibility of broadening of the curriculum base:

> The training....does not aim at elaborating a new set of subject matter, nor reviewing programmes. Rather, search for big principles that allow a better coherence to the general curriculum" (1994.a. p,6)

So, under the pretext of "curriculum coherence", Berthelot not only eliminates the representation of other cultural heritages of Quebec communities from the curriculum, but he also justifies the exclusion of "border knowledge" from the Quebec culture through assimilation in the "common culture."

Consistent with his project, therefore, is the objective of training as integration (meaning assimilation) instead of inclusion in a culture "constructed in common". In Berthelot's terms, the objective of training is: "to include **some**[10] people who share a common affiliation to the Quebec society, a common culture founded on the French language, history, the respect of rights and freedoms and human dignity. (1994.a.p,7). Finally, to complete the training process, Berthelot proposes "a differentiated pedagogy", following the example of France; namely through "enriching activities or of recuperation inside a common programme" (p,9). Clearly, the assumption behind the "enriching activities" is that immigrant students are somewhat lacking by virtue of their "border knowledge"; hence they need to leave this heritage behind in order to fit into mainstream education. Accordingly, the whole educational strategies proposed by Berthelot do not seek to accommodate minority groups but to provide them with means of "recuperation" as though they had "inherent" deficiencies in need of compensation.

III. Towards An Egalitarian Pluralism And A Pluralist Education in Quebec

Opposed to the cultural and educational project proposed by Berthelot, I suggest an alternative project that derives from a pluralist vision of democracy as well as a pluralist conception of educational management. That is, a participatory management aiming at encouraging a deliberative and democratic dialogue at school as laid out in my theoretical framework. Essentially, the proposed pluralist education is based on a diversified conception of equality which grants its pratictioners both the right to "live one's difference" as individuals, and as communities in order to ensure a harmonious coexistence within the public school.

The application of this conception of education, however, requires a profound change in the institutional culture of the Quebec school and its mandate. This new orientation entails confronting the whole underlying organizational culture. That is, the canonization of organizational beliefs and practices at the core of the canonization of the curriculum. Accordingly, the first task in this institutional change is at the ideological and political levels. To start a committment to multi-ethnic education derived from a real democratic dialogue between all partners involved in the educational enterprise: parents, family, state, students, professors, peers, and experts in order to pave the way for a real consultation process in Quebec society. Then, to supplement this consultation process with structural and institutional(systemic), procedural, and pedagogical reforms (teaching and learning strategies), in order to "ground" the new multicultural ideology in the institutional culture. (Belhachmi, 1995).

The principal goal is dual: to transform the student into an independent critical being able to engage in the democratic process of society-not just on economic terms, but in political and cultural terms as well. ~~That is~~, the provision of public institutions that prepare citizens to become full participants in the cultural and intellectual governance of their society through information-sharing, and the development of intercultural sensitivity and competence. In a nutshell the preparation and training of "polyvalent" citizens through a carefully structured intercultural experience to appreciate "living together" at school and in society.

Accordingly, the school mandate focuses on the democratic practice of the whole educational process, and the provision of an intercultural experience at school as the tool to implement that process. In such a process, the school takes into consideration not only the specific individual differences, but also the collective idyocyncracies that the students are affiliated with as both profoundly shape their identity as well as their learning process

(identification process, self-esteem, and achievement).
For an optimal success of this democratic process of multicultural education, I propose an action reform plan involving three simultaneous educational strategies:1. The structural and institutional accommodation of citizens bearers of cultures and religions other than Catholic or Protestant within the public school. 2. The broadening of the curriculum content. 3. And the adoption of an intercultural pedagogy.

1. The Structural and Institutional Accommodation.

The first structural reform requires an openness in "the mental structures" of educational stakeholders to new post-modernist forms of cultural coherence. That is, a new representation of the public school beyond the modernist/monolithic conception of cultural identity which limits social relations to a binary mode of majority vs minority, advantaged vs disadvantaged etc.. After all, cultural coherence is intimately linked to the school both as a system of institutional representation, and as a means of reproduction whereby individuals and social groups shape the person, her relationships with others, the material and spiritual worlds. (Bourdieu,1990). Not only does the school sustain the historical evolution of the predominant social and moral orders at the structural level, but it also governs and orients the person's social behaviour within a group's daily life (Berger & Luckman 1967, and Bourdieu 1990).

Accordingly, the school is not only a "transmitter" and training agency, but also a powerful "information and communication agency" of cultural coherence. As such, I argue, the school has a moral and ethical obligation to make the "accuracy of information" it disseminates one essential aspect of its mandate. For this reason, also the accuracy of information should not be restricted to the teaching and learning process in the curriculum alone, but extend to other equally important and complementary educational services. To name a few, these include the type of documentation promoted in the public school library, the circulating posters

about the daily life of school, pedagogical material, and any other forms of communications disseminated through computers (internet, games, etc..). Other educational strategies at the structural and institutional like the inclusion within the school personnel and PTA's the different cultural backgrounds represented by the students at school are also of utmost importance to reinforce cultural multiplicity at school. In doing so, the school's institutional message will be more eloquent than any reforms of the curriculum.

2.The Broadening of the Curriculum

From the post-modernist perspective, the curriculum does not constitute the main foci of cultural coherence but rather a supplement educational tool in the overall strategy of multicultural education. As such, the curriculum becomes a pedagogical device to "anchor" cultural multiplicity in peoples' cognitive representations of culture. This new orientation of the curriculum necessarily requires flexibility in the conception and application of curricular reforms. That is, taking into consideration not only the specific cultural context in which these reforms are embedded, but also the particular punctual needs of the school. Accordingly, the curriculum reforms I propose for Quebec are highly are punctual and contextual. On the one hand they represent a practical response to the present transitional phase of the history of Quebec and its era of political deliberation of cultural and religious diversity. On the other hand, these reforms are envisaged within the general framework of the public culture presently in the making within Quebec society.

Last but not least, despite the variety the disciplines where cultural coherence must be promoted such as history, religion, foreign languages, and literature, I only tackle in this study religion and foreign languages as they represent major areas of contention in Quebec's multicultural education. Ultimately, the educational strategies I propose to accompany the educational reforms ought to be viewed as fundamental procedural modalities to be grounded in "the culture of the public school", and replace the

outmoded technocratic strategies applied in the public school system of Quebec.

2.1. Religion

In light of the importance spirituality in peoples' lives derived from religious studies (Milot, 1993) and of relational knowledge derived my post-modernist feminist perspective (Belhachmi, 1995), the inclusion of religion in the curriculum has significant ramifications for the teaching process. The objective is not the "teaching of religion", but about religion. That is, to ensure the student's understanding of the social world as "a multi-religious universe", where different religions play a crucial role in social groups' identity and identification. Instead of favouring one religion over another, teaching about religion aims at initiating the student to the multiplicity of religions, in order to prepare him/her to peacefully coexist with individuals and social groups bearers of these various religions on the basis of equality, mutual respect and reciprocity.

Furthermore, the teaching about the multiplicity of religion at school is justified by philosophical, political, and educational reasons. The philosophical reasons are derived from the liberal philosophy contained in our laws and charters which acknowledge both the freedom of affiliation or religious association and their free expression. Likewise, the free choice of the "good life" on the basis of complete information provided by different groups which compose society, social institutions, and the state; are also granted by our fundamental freedoms. The political reasons stem from the general principles of our Charters (Federal and provincial) that grant the right of existence to all religious confessions. The objection that some citizens may have to this issue may only concern the modalities of teaching about religion in the public school. That is, how to avoid religious particularism (the practice of civil right), and at the same time prepare students to live harmoniously in a common civic space. Finally, the educational reasons for the teaching about religion, apart from the enrichment of the students' general education, is meant allow them

to take personal positions vis a vis different traditions: religious, para-religious, spiritual, secular, and atheist as well as to enable them, on the basis of information, to freely choose the option with which they identify the most.

Significantly, my proposal of integrating religion in the school system has a historical precedent in Quebec. A programme of history and cultures of religions has been proposed by the Catholic School Board (le Comite Catholique) as an experiential programme for the last three years of secondary education[11]. In fact, this programme was so successful, that it became official for the last two years of secondary education for almost a decade (from 1975 to 1983). Notwithstanding, following the pedagogical reform of 1981 (referred to as le regime pedagogique de 1981) and the issuing of laws 40 and 3 (les projets de lois 40 et 3) of secondary education, this programme was totally illiminated and replaced instead with a moral education as a basic element for all teachings at schools[12].

In my view the revision of this decision, especially in this particular period of deliberation in Quebec on the religious and cultural recognition is all the more imperative. The resuming of this programme will certainly contribute to the understanding of religion as a human phenomenon. That is, to explore the multiple facets, and expressions of religions, and elucidate their respective role to various communities. In short, to document and trace the evolution of various religions in human history, as well as unfold these religions' universality and respective contribution to the construction of Human civilization.

2.2. Foreign languages

The teaching of second languages remains a relatively unexplored issue in the context of multicultural Western democracies, in need for further research and studies. At the core of this issue, I argue, is a fundamental political issue of the extent of recognition of linguistic variety in the linguistic policies of Western liberal democracies and their validation in practice. Thus, I maintain, essential and not fully explored in multicultural education in Western liberal democracies are the

links between various political constituencies (communities) and the state in the course, and evolution of linguistic policies on the one hand. And the connection of these linguistic policies to the general educational policies, procedures, and outcomes on the other hand.

Awareness of these two links help to put into perspective the reasons why some liberal democracies are more progressive than others. For example, the experience of bilingual education (Spanish and English) in the United States is a notable example of the US state's attempt accommodate the particular educational needs of the Hispanic communities. By the same token, this experience also informs us about the civil power of the Hispanic community as a political constituency in the negotiation of bilingual education in the United States as clearly evidenced in the states of California and New York, where Hispanic communities are heavily concentrated.

In contrast, the experience of the Arab community illustrates both the Quebec's state resistance to the linguistic recognition of the Arab community as well as the lack of political power of the Arab community as constituency in the negotiation of the linguistic policies of Quebec despite the large concentration of the Arab community in the Metropolitan area of Montreal (70,000). As result, the teaching Arabic even as an option in the curriculum was refused by school boards, and relegated instead to "after class hours". The argument invoked was "equal treatment" to all other linguistic communities. In my view, this argument is a political cover up by the state to exclude the teaching of foreign languages in the school system; while using the dominance of French to protect Quebec's educational system from "inffiltrations" from border knowledge of non-French communities. As such, the linguistic policies of Quebec serve as procedural educational means to reinforce the ethnicization of Quebec's educational policies, while excluding foreign languages from mainstream education be it Arabic or other. By the same token, the linguistic policies serve as strategic educational tools in the assimilation of various social groups into the French-Catholic cultural heritage. Ultimately, the

linguistic policies of Quebec are an efficient political device in the dis-empowerment of various political constituencies, actual and potential, in Quebec not only on matters of recognition of the language of origin of various linguistic communities, but also on matters of integrating these languages as second languages in mainstream education. **That is, the formalization of the boarder knowledge within the public school.**

One alternative to this ethnicization of culture, and its related linguistic policy of assimilation is to provide the teaching of other langues as second languages, according to the constituencies existing in different cities of Quebec province. This alternative strategy will not only be more representative of the heterogeneous terrain of education of Quebec, but also beneficial for its future as a pluralist democracy. For the minorities for whom French is not the language of origin, they can practice their civil right of difference through the learning of their language of origin; while sharing French as a civic language with the rest of Quebec. Moreover, the learning of the language of origin as a second language allows minorities to regain their self-esteem as a social group; while contributing to the enrichment of their "border knowledge" and cultural heritage within the public school system.

As for the majority, the learning of second languages, represents a "formal introduction" to cultural difference as well as a broadening of interpersonal communications within the "institutional culture" of the public school. By the same token, it yields to a real appreciation of " border knowledge" through discovery of the multiplicity of strands in human thought and civilization. Last but not least, second language teaching and learning undoubtedly builds "a community of learned citizens" as it allows Canadians to become more competitive and efficient in pursuing certain doctorate specializations of regional or international character such as Middle East Studies; Comparative and cultural studies, Comparative and International studies and many more; all of which enable citizens to compete equally for high

profile jobs and positions within and outside the government on the basis of "equal opportunity" and meritocracy rather than ethnic, racial, religious, or gender backgrounds.

3. The Place of Intercultural Pedagogy

The inter-cultural pedagogy I propose is based on the international educational policies advocated since the beginning of the 1970s by UNESCO. These policies call for the introduction of the international dimension in the perspectives of education and its integration at all levels of the teaching and learning process in order to establish collaboration and solidarity between peoples that constitute the world community. (Belhachmi, 1983). Not surprisingly, these policies were initiated by the United Nations as a response to increasing denunciations made by developing countries against the "globalization de la culture". In fact, these educational policies were concurrent with the developing countries's denunciation of 1974 of both the New World Economic Order, and the New World Information Order. The objective of these denunciations was on the one hand, peoples' reclaims of their self-determination at the economic, political, and cultural levels. And on the other hand, their aspirations to establish principles of interdependence and difference in the cultural exchange between world communities. (Belhachmi, 1983).

The situation of the world community being similar to that of multicultural societies in terms of its demographic composition (racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural) calls for the urgency of providing inter-cultural pedagogy a central position in the strategy of multicultural education in Western democracies. By its very nature, the intercultural pedagogy facilitates the communication of the intercultural message at school as well as its optimal reception in multi-cultural classes. That is, the coexistence of interdependence and difference in the educational process. As such, intercultural pedagogy represents an adequate solution that need to be incorporated in mainstream multicultural education in Western liberal democracies. As so aptly summarized by Abdallah-Pretceil (1986):

> The intercultural pedagogy does not have for objective the teaching of cultures, be it ours or that of others, but to give again to all learning process its cultural dimension. This does not mean to give teaching a new objective, but on the contrary, to consider that, under the pressure of events, the school must develop, within an intercultural perspective. The intercultural dimension is a methodological and strategic response to cultural pluralism. (1986, p. 168).

Conclusion

Contemporary policies and practices of education in a multicultural Western liberal democracies are increasingly developing and evolving in a complex field of forces where governments are morally and ethically compelled to respond to the various pressures of the different sections of their internal constituencies. It is important within this complex cultural terrain where the power of the state and that of communities interlap, that the multicultural educational practices reflect the degree of democracy enjoyed by citizens.

Ultimately, the struggle of multicultural minorities for political recognition and representation of religious and cultural difference in the public school system indicates the place of these social groups along other social forces struggling for civil and democratic rights in Western democracies. In turn, the place given to the minorities both in society and in the public school system signals the degree of democracy practised in Western liberal societies and in their public institutions.

Notes I

1. Postmodernism is defined here as being :

> a process of retheorizing the objects and exoperiences of everydaylife in the twighlight of modernity, an epochal turning point in how the world and the possibilities of human agency are conceived. It is a shift from liberal humanism with positivistic science to a conjunction of de-centered subjectivity and multi-sited agengy within a post-paradigmatic diaspora. (Nicholson, 1990:121).

In addition to the fact that postmodernism views identity as continuously displaced and replaced, and thus constantly reconstructed, it also views social reality as discursive. Thus, it emphasizes on language as a component and a product of forces of power, and not a transparent reflection of a reality that we can capture by simple conceptualization. (Nicholson, L.J. (Ed). (1990). Feminism/Postmodernism. New York:Routledge.

2. Inclusion is defined here as a process that aims at exceeding equality of principle to reach equality of fact, and action without assimilation. This type of equality requires the institutionalization of three components of citizenship: legal, political, and social. (T.H Marshall, 1954, Citizenship and Social Class. Cambridge University Press)

3. "Nomadic identity", apart from reflecting the author's Arab-Islamic heritage, is also inspired from Gille Deleuze's philosophical notion of "the nomadic subject"; and my own developed notion of "nomadic feminism" whereby subjectivity is integrated in the notion of identity to counter-ballance the "objectivity" of universalist notions of identity promoted by liberal modernism. As such, "nomadic identity" promotes movement, dialogue, and interdependence in order to expand both the sciological and epistemological bases of cultural identity in a post-modern era.

4. Alterity is not defined as a radical neglect by individuals or social groups of their specific cultural identity affiliations. Rather alterity suggest the renewal "from within" of the core identitty and its constant adjustment to new contexts, while avoiding ethnocentricism that prevails in the public institutions and school programmes. Significaltly, the importance of alterity has been recognized in the school reforms in the 1960s in Quebec following "la revolution tranquille" instigated by people of French origin the Quebec. With the increasingly heterogeneous character of Quebec today, I see no reason why this alterity should not continue its natural historical course and not integrate the various community groups that compose the Quebec society today.

Notes II

5. Despite the pedagogical change of 1982 from confessionals school to secular schools with a "common" moral education in the public school. Most public institutions still adhere to a strong Catholic inspired moral education as a result of the long-standing power of the church over the various school boards in Quebec.

6. The last refereundum of 1995 in Quebec, intsigated by the French population dominating the political system, and the French separatists is only one recent example of the minority groups uneasy coalitions with the state.

7. It is ironic that the immigrants community is called "cultural communities" while at the same they are excluded from the national Canadian culture. This, in my view reflects not only the internal colonization of various sub-cultures within the supra-culture of Canada, but also reminds us of a similar strategy deployed by old colonial empires in their concept of "folklore cultures" unsuitable to be integrated in the cultural policies.

8. Notice that the policies are geared for "immigrants" as a target-group in view of their assimilation in the culture of Quebec. Aas such they are atomized, eductionist policies that are not conceived for the inclusion of all social groups in Quebec in an hlistic societal project.

9. The call by the Arab-Muslim community of Montreal has been officially formulated in a Public Press release in the daily La Presse, and received a public response followed by an unending polemics in Quebec's press throughout 1994-95.

10.The French text says des personnes, instead of les personnes, which is the plural for une person, which is more inclusive of people.

11. Ministère de l'éducation Programme d'Etudes, 2eme secondaire, Histoire Générale, Québec. 1982.

12. (Conseil Supérieur de l'éducation Les Défis Éducatifs de la Pluralité au Québec, MEQ. C.S.E., 1987. p,23)

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